SO WHAT!

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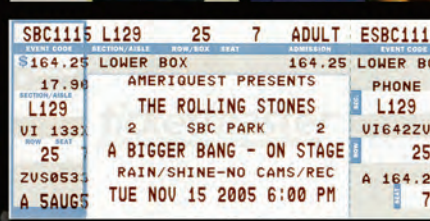

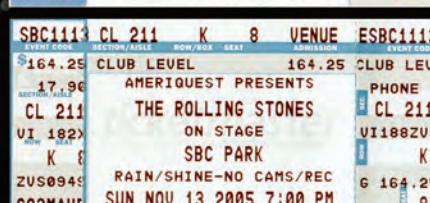

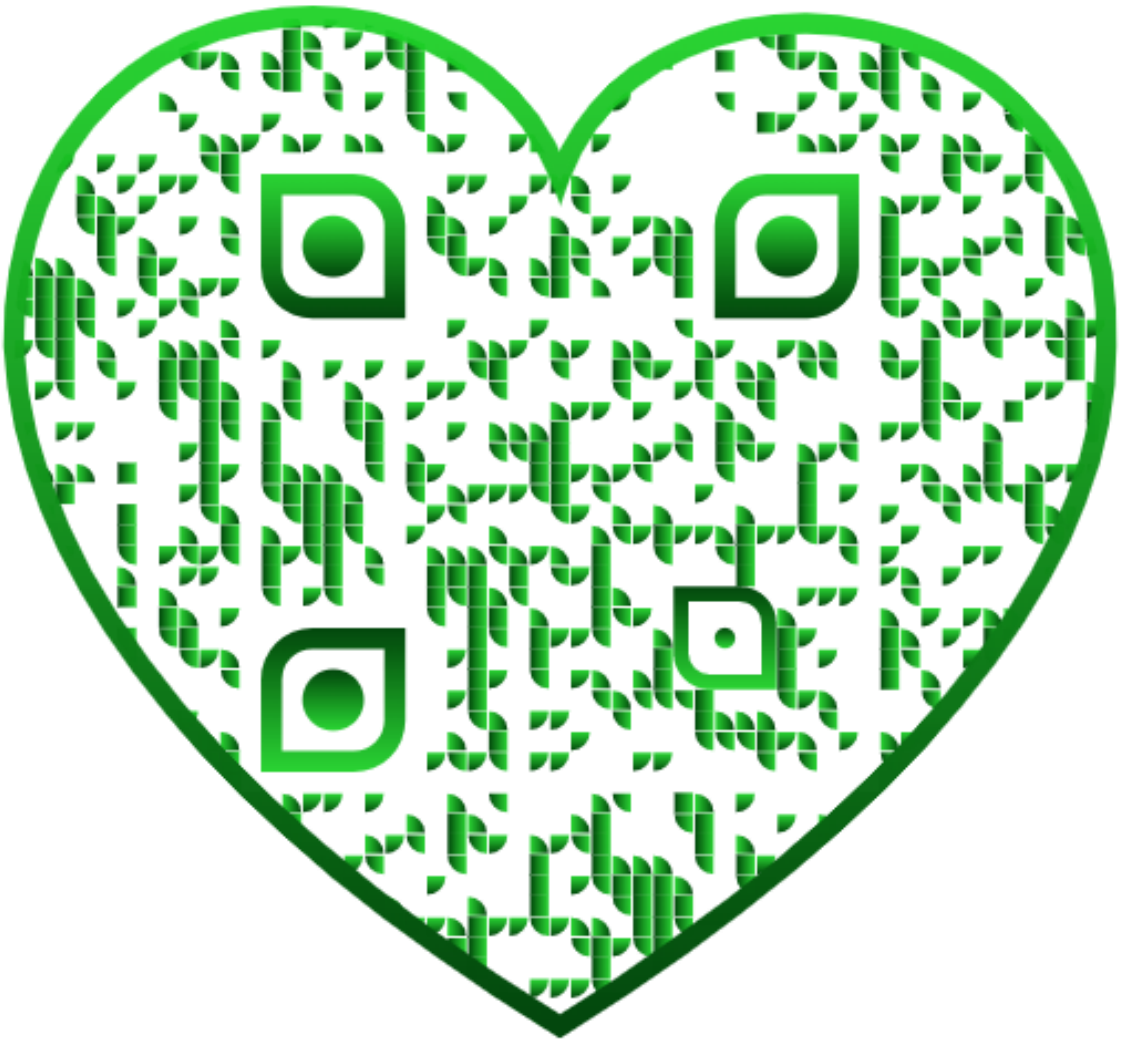

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SO WHAT!

THE METALLICA CLUB MAGAZINE · VOLUME 12/NUMBER 4/2006

THE METALLICA CLUB
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The Rolling Stones and Metallica spend two nights together in San Francisco. Our editor finds that though he can't always get what he wants, when the hour strikes our boys provide satisfaction.

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Please keep those pitbulls on the leash!

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Your over-the-shoulder Beholder holder.

editor's note

SO HERE WE ARE, perhaps a little late BUT relatively hot off the heels of 12.3, and with 13.1 being done as I write...

Before I get into this issue or ANY issue for that matter (arf! arf!) I'd like to address the sometimes sporadic publication of this here mag. It isn't always feasible to put out 4 issues in a linear, calendar year. I mean, yes it is, but not of the quality we like to try and achieve. In order for an issue to go out to you, I feel it must deliver something you have not seen before, something which is at least a little unique, and something which is generally reflective of the time. And frankly, that isn't always like clockwork. Thus the decision is made to go for quality as much as possible. Therefore some of you won't see your 4 issues within the linear year BUT you WILL receive your 4 issues due per membership year period (thanks to Sam and Vickie I might add, who keep a good track of these things). And while I'm here, one more thing about a couple of your favorite sections, Whiplash and Sponsors...I think we can safely say that these will rise strongly again in the coming year, and trust you all understand that the reason they've been a little absent in 2005 is because high on the list of things an Editor shouldn't do during the band's time off is sort of show up and make 'em work! Just like us, they deserve a break, and I feel you all understand that well. Thanks, as always, for your patience and support, and thanks as always for the many kind words the magazine receives. Now, that being said...

...This issue was put together hot off the heels of those Stones shows, thus we have a large report of what it was all about from the perspective of your somewhat eccentric Ed, plus we have a 16 page photographic folio of the first few days the guys jammed together in preparation for those shows...they were also the first time the guys had jammed together since November '04, exactly one year prior. A simple, straight outta the cannon issue.

13.1 will be a treat for fans of Mr. James Hetfield, that much I can assure you, and there might even be a bit of news scratching around about just what these guys are gonna get up in 2006...as we got ready for the presses just about post-Xmas here I can confirm that plans for the New Year and beyond were being made in a strictly studio sense.

So yup, your British Detective Ed here figures 2006 will be a big one in terms of Metalliaction...buckle up now, 'cos it's the right thing to do!

Steffan, SW! Editor

P.S. Many thanks to the Stones' official photographer Jacob Cohl for his sterling efforts in supplying some wonderful photographs. Very much appreciated by us all...

SO WHAT!

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enter mailman

LYRICAL ASSISTANCE

I just wanted to say that Metallica has been a real inspiration and driving force in my life. If it wasn't for Kirk and James I never would've even picked up a guitar and now it's my obsession! Some of James's lyrics have given me something to relate to and gotten me through some of the toughest times in my life. Thanx.

Matt Hatfield
Pineville, WV

SOLO SPOTTING

Hi Kirk,
Today is Nov.22, the day the Guitar World Mag. came out with YOU on the front! I just finished reading it, I enjoyed it very much! Thank you for all you put into it. When you were asked the question what solo would you want to be remembered for, well of course I love your choices; you said Hero Of The Day, Master, Devil's Dance and The Thing That Should Not Be. But I don't want you to forget about the song on Ride The Lightning, you know, the chords of the song that always warms my heart everytime I hear it, FADE TO BLACK! That one has to one of your favorites too, right?

As I'm typing this, I'm listening to my concert CD from Oct. 17th, 2004 in D.C. and Master is now playing! I will always remember the concert and during Master Of Puppets how you just happen to look over at me after you played one of your killer solos, yeah the little things like that keep a smile on my face even more than a year later! Thank you!

Kelly Richick
Joppa, MD

ED: Excellent stuff, nice to know that the Hammett solo remains as appreciated as ever.

BLANKET COVERAGE? HOME USE MERCH?

For Toby! A MetallicA blanket would be so cool and useful. I once saw a KISS one and it was really good looking. Why not a MetallicA one? Oh, and a bed rest, trash can (not including any cd or stuff. :-)) and some goodies we can – you know – use at home.

Sina Sehim
Istanbul, Turkey

ED: Let me ask Toby and Danna what they think of these ideas and whether there's anything on the horizon...

MEXICAN BRANCH OF THE LARS ULRICH FAN CLUB SPEAKS

Hello....! I am from Mexico City, have been mega fan of the group by 19 years from 1986, I have both been in shows that have offered and I have traveled to Canada (Toronto) to see them, one in SKY DOME, a festival along with Limp Biskit, Deftones, etc and another one in Air Canada Center, and I am big fan of Lars Ulrich. I only wanted to know when you would estimate a return in Mexico? Greetings to LARS ULRICH of whom I am GREAT FAN, and to the others of the group, JAMES, KIRK and ROB.

Gutierrez Jimenez Andres
Distrito Federal, Mexico

ED: No word on any touring yet Gutierrez, the guys are only just stirring for studio action as I write (December 14th 2005).

MORE TRAVELING FANS FOR THE STONES SHOWS

Hi there, just read the fan club news about the concert in SFO. Read that there were fans from Chicago and Norway, but what about the two guys from the Netherlands. They read about the concert and they bought a ticket with Lufthansa and tickets for the show on Ebay. We told our wifes that we badly needed a break so we travelled to SFO on the 15th, Dusseldorf/Frankfurt/San Francisco, saw the concert and left on Thursday 17th. The show was so great. So much energy they spread, the same energy we saw during the concerts in Holland and Cologne. It was a great happening. We can only hope that they will start touring again next year.

Rob Zwanenburg
Netherlands

ED: Glad you had a good time Rob, though just to be clear the concert you saw was at SBC Park in SF, as SFO is the airport...or are you speaking of another show? Come to think of it, arriving on the 15th for a show on the 15th is do-able but tight on time...am I losing the plot here? Help!

MORE LYRIX?

Dear Steffan,
I was just wondering if you have considered doing a revised and expanded edition of the lyrix book. It would be excellent if it could include band comments, obviously mostly from Papa Het. The comments could include not only the story behind the song, but how they feel about it in general in terms of playing it, retrospect, whatever. It would be great if it could be released around the same time as, and including the lyrics from, the (hopefully) soon-to-be-recorded album. Thanx,

Amy White
Lutherville, MD

ED: It hasn't come up recently, but perhaps it will now!

shortest straw

HERE'S THE RESULTS OF OUR CONTEST FROM ISSUE 12.2.

If you recall, the contest was inspired by one of the two main subjects of that issue, Torben Ulrich. The two-part task was to A) name five internationally recognized Danish products, and B) share an important piece of your own philosophy on life with us. The results:

WINNER!!!

Costas Archontous, Pafos, Cyprus.

A DANISH PRODUCTS
1 Lego
2 Lurpak Smor
3 Vestas Windmills
4 Bang & Olufsen
5 Carlsberg

B PHILOSOPHY
If what we call God, or the creator behind all these, could be parallelized with the ocean, then ALL OF US are droplets from that ocean, all with the same divine energy, all equal, all "Gods!" We are not insignificant incapable beings, BUT people who can CREATE their own reality and achieve whatever they set out to do. We just need to believe in OURSELVES! Nothing is impossible! Life is not a bitch! Life is a gift! Time is not money, time is your life! So, don't waste your gift, go NOW and KNOW you CAN create your PARADISE!

RUNNERS UP!!!

Chad Koon, Pensacola, FL

A DANISH PRODUCTS
1 LEGO: The LEGO Company is one of the world's leading suppliers of play materials and the largest manufacturer of construction toys.
2 Danfoss: Danfoss is Denmark's largest industrial group and is a world leader in research, development and production of mechanical and electronic components and controls.
3 Carlsberg: The fifth largest brewing group in the world and is today firmly anchored in around 140 markets and brewed in 40 countries.
4 Danisco: Danisco A/S is one of the world's largest producers and developers of food ingredients, sweeteners, feed ingredients and sugar.
5 HEMPEL: HEMPEL provides protective coatings in more than 80 countries and has grown to become the world's largest independent supplier of marine and protective coatings.

B PHILOSOPHY
The term, "you never know what you have until it's gone," has become somewhat clichéd but until it happens to you it won't ring true. I lost my Dad five days before my nineteenth birthday to the same cancer that killed my Grandpa, whom I never had the chance to know. I've learned to never take anything for granted and to be happy with the time you have because you never know when something's going to get taken away from you.

Marius Pettersen, Trondheim, Norway

A DANISH PRODUCTS
1 Carlsberg (Beer)
2 Arla Foods (Dairy products)
3 Bang & Olufsen (Home entertainment etc.)
4 Royal Copenhagen (Porcelain)
5 Lego (Toys)

B PHILOSOPHY
It's important to take chances. Don't look back and regret the things you didn't do, it's better to take a chance on the opposite and maybe regretting the things you did do. Don't plan everything. The parties, trips etc that you didn't plan often become better because you hadn't already pictured how it all would go down, therefore the event itself can't derail from what you had originally planed. Take care of your family and friends. In the end, if you mess up, they will be the ones who are there for you.

Vladimir Gmyzin, Moscow, Russia

A DANISH PRODUCTS
1 Carlsberg (beer)
2 Tuborg (beer)
3 Ecco (shoes)
4 Lego (toys)
5 Stimorol (chewing gum)

B PHILOSOPHY
Find your peace. Find your say. Find the fair road on your way. Trust you gave. A child to save. Helps to find God in yourself.

THE PRIZES FOR OUR DANISH CONTEST EXTRAVAGANZA:

The Grand Prize winner, Costas Archontous, will receive a photograph of Torben and Lars signed by both, plus a copy of Torben's mind-bending film 'Before The Wall' on DVD.

The three runners up, Chad Koon, Marius Pettersen and Vladimir Gmyzin, will receive unique 'Danepaks' with a signature of authenticity!!!

AND NOW...

METALLICA

ESCAPE FROM THE STUDIO '05-'06

THIS ISSUE'S COMPETITION...

They say that a picture says a thousand words. So why not send us a thousand words that describe Metallica... in the form of a picture. Here are the guidelines:

1 Submissions can be either via a print OR in digital format. If sending in digital format, please take care to keep the photo at 1 MB or less, as otherwise our systems could choke up.
2 NO PHOTOSHOPPING other than to compensate for dark/light issues/enhance what is already in the frame.
3 Do not copy, scan or use anyone elses' original, copywritten photos. The work must be entirely your own.
4 ONE photo per entry please.
5 Part of the grand prize will include a photo from this issue, so your entry must also include your FAVORITE PHOTO from this here issue, 12.4. List by first stating the page number and then a brief description of the photo if more than one on the page. Also, please tell us your preference in t-shirt size between L and XL.

The Grand Prize winner will receive (where possible) a reproduction of the photo they have chosen from this-here issue 12.4, framed and signed by the band members, another photo of the guys holding the winning entry, plus a set of very limited Metallica/Rolling Stones crew t-shirts. Two runners-up will receive a set of the same very limited Metallica/Rolling Stones t-crew shirts.

THE DEADLINE IS MAY 25TH AND WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN ISSUE 13.2.

club news

METALLICA STEP OUT FOR LIVE FESTIVALS IN '06

Here we go folks...as the boys putter about the studio manifesting their next slab of Metallic alchemy (!!!), they will be taking time off here and there to play a few dates here and there for the odd 50,000 people or so. First up, in March, Metallica will play a series of one-day festivals promoted by Big Concerts and called The Coca-Cola Massive Mix Festivals throughout South Africa. It marks the band's first ever visit to the continent, however sharp fans will know that Lars did live in South Africa for a period of time as a youth. The dates are as follows:

March 18 – Supersport Park , Centurion (between Johannesburg & Pretoria), SA

March 21 – ABSA Stadium, Durban, SA

March 25 – Point Stadium, Cape Town SA

The acts performing will be a series of top local artists, Simple Plan, The Rasmus, Seether, Collective Soul, Metallica and as a warm-down/chill-out conclusion to the evening, Fatboy Slim. Metallica are currently scheduled to perform 90 minutes per show. Tickets are on-sale now via www.computicket.co.za.

Next up will be a Euro trip, with the following 8 dates confirmed...

June 3 – Rock Am Ring Festival, Nurburgring, GER

June 4 – Rock Im Park Festival, Nurnberg, GER

June 6 – Waldbuhne, Berlin, GER

June 8 – Gelredome, Arnhem, HOL

June 10 – Download Festival, Donington, UK

June 11 – Download Festival, Dublin, IRE

June 15 – Novarock Festival, Nickelsdorf, AUT

June 17 – Heineken Jammin Festival, Immola, ITA

Finally, in August it's a hop, skip and jump over the Pacific pond to Japan and the following engagements...

August 12 – Marine Stadium Messe Summer Sonic Festival, Tokyo, JAP

August 13 – WTK Open Air INTEX Summer Sonic Festival, Osaka, JA

As always, details for ALL dates are available on www.metclub.com, with information updated regularly.

THE DARWIN AWARDS

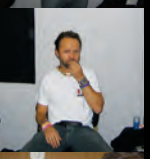
On January 25th, Metallica performed at the Sundance Festival in Park City, Utah to support the premier of the film 'The Darwin Awards'. Directed by Finn Taylor and starring, Joesph Fiennes and Wynonna Ryder, The Darwin Awards follows a cautious forensic detective (Fiennes) and a daredevil rambunctious insurance claims investigator (Winonna Ryder), who embark on a road trip to further understand the motivation of those who risk their lives (and sometimes lose them) in pursuit of potential Darwin Awards. The show, a private party at the small'n'sweaty Harry O's on Park City's Main Street, was a huge success, with cast members, Sundance hob-nobbers and some of our very own Metclubbers pasted to the walls by brute decibel force volume as the band blistered through the following set:

Creeping Death, For Whom The Bell Tolls, Wherever I May Roam, Fuel, Welcome Home (Sanitarium), Sad But True, Fade To Black, Master Of Puppets, One, Enter Sandman, Last Caress, Battery, Seek and Destroy.

STOP PRESS!!! Yes, it's official! This dude called 'Rick Rubin' will be producing the next Metallica album!

start us up

THE 2005 METALLICA WORLD TOUR saw them go out as special guests to the Rolling Stones on the latter's 'A Bigger Bang' jaunt. Carrying a severely stripped down production, no pyro and facing plenty of people who had never seen (or heard) them before, it was certainly a unique Metallica experience, as STEFFAN CHIRAZI recounts using words and the odd few pictures. And what's all this about 'key parties'?!!!



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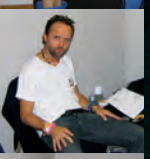
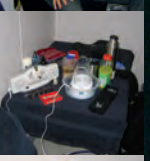
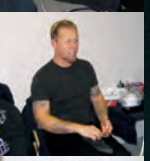
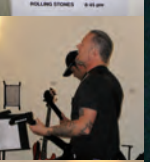
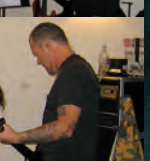
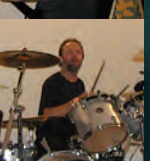
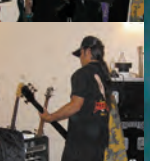
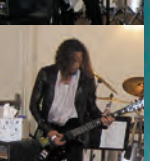




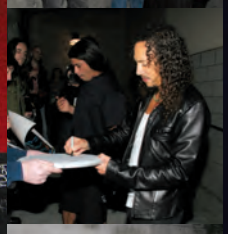
TONIGHT'S SHOW




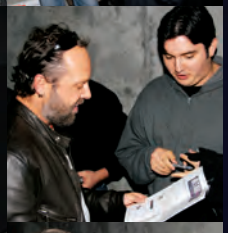




"I've got my sponsor's section!"

The small gaggle of crew congregated outside the portacabin that comprises Metallica's dressing room look around at the cheerfully cheeky, mischievous voice. Lars Ulrich is holding a small camera, on whose screen is a photo of two perfectly taut buttocks in black stretch underwear with legs reaching for the sky. "Kirk forhelvede!" he giggles, quickly darting back inside the cabin to avoid being 'caught' with a photographic instrument. Lars, as you probably remember, does not, has not, and will not ever be a member of the Rolling Stones. And as such, because he is on their tour but not a member of their band, he must also adhere to the rule laid down from a chair on high that stipulates no cameras will be allowed backstage. Anywhere. Not even supporting act band members can take photographs backstage. Of themselves or anything. Presumably, the fear is that a certain occupant of this certain 'chair-on-high' might be in the photo. Even if that photo is taken inside one's own dressing room, of one's own guitarist's buttocks as one's own guitarist is doing his usual pre-performance yoga. It is, of course, absurd. Thus why despite his experience, maturity and calm-in-the-clinch, Lars Ulrich cannot resist a little 7-year-old style rebellion and I cannot resist telling you about it.





If I even attempted to take a photograph backstage, I would be risking not only the professional reputation of Metallica, but also my testicles and their ability to produce more children.

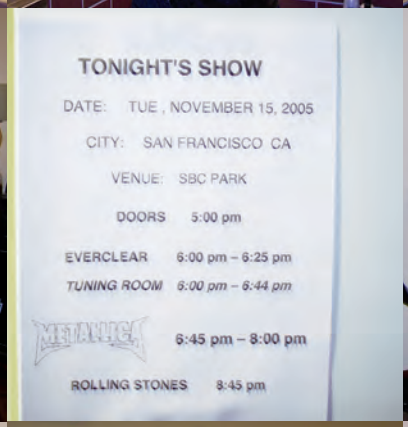
Two-odd months ago, the news was announced that the Rolling Stones had invited Metallica to be their special guests at two San Francisco shows on November 13th and 15th in SBC Park. Given that the guys had been subconsciously searching for a decent way to find their way into work mode again, the invitation was perfect. Some rehearsals, a 75 minute set comprising firm favorites and the odd rarity, plus, most importantly, the knowledge that they would be the support act. That they would have no real production or responsibilities for production. That this was not a Metallica show in the strictest sense of the phrase. Perfect. It was also, I will now reveal, a crushing inevitability that the two would share a stage, as somewhere between 1988 and 1989 Lars Ulrich and I saw Mick Jagger at the movies in Manhattan. If my memory serves me well, we all ended up seeing the then-latest Mike Leigh film. Now let me make it clear that we weren't hangin' together, but such coincidences don't happen without a prophecy involved, and thus we both knew then that this day was certainly going to be inevitable...

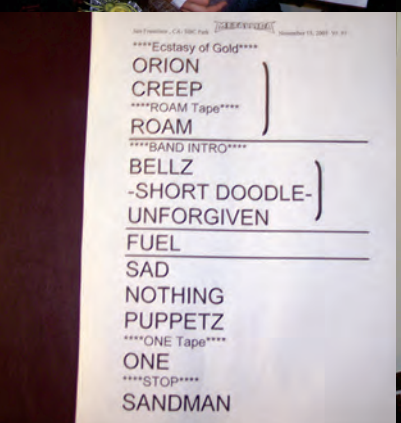
Of course, as the dates came closer, the problems of being a support act for the first time in a decade and a half became more acute. Firstly that photography rule. Not a deal-breaker by any stretch, but nonetheless a little bizarre given the fact that we give a shit about **** ****** about as much as Keith Richards did when wandering around in the '70s and hanging out with Gram Parsons. More bizarrely was how the amount of crew was capped at a small, tight number, namely Dan Braun, Tony Di Cioccio, Zach Harmon, Big Mick, Bean, Flemming, Justin, Chad and Paul, Thom Robb plus Jeff Yeager (and let me say right here, right now that these guys and gals did the work of twice their number...impressive? I think so). I believe Mike Gillies was running around too, but am not prepared to confirm

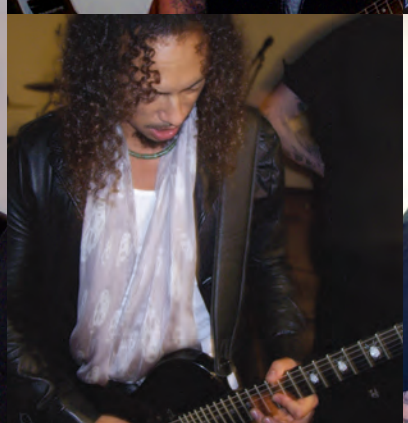
this in print as my eyesight is poor and I could've been imagining things! Indeed, at a certain point, I realized that anything I saw could be something I shouldn't, or hadn't, seen, and that if I were to even attempt to take a photograph backstage, I would be risking not only the professional reputation of Metallica and its employees, but also my testicles and their ability to produce more children. Word had, after all, circulated that those caught breaking tour rules would be grabbed, bound, gagged and presented to the occupant of the chair-on-high, who would then do exceedingly horrible things involving blowtorches and gaffer's tape. I made that last bit up, but you get the idea how things were starting to feel.

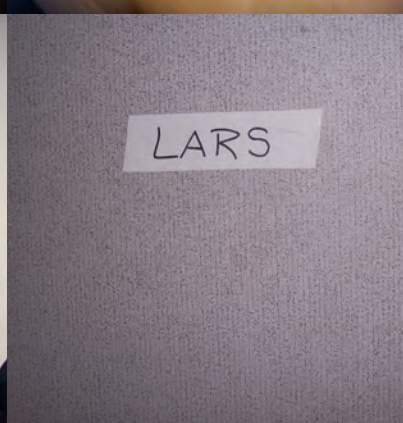
I should also probably take a moment here to explain that if there's one person in the world who is less enamored by The Rolling Stones than me, I have yet to meet them. That is not to say I do not respect them; of course I do. They're legends and trailblazers, tremendous writers and were wonderful architects of rock'n'roll's flambouyant spirit. It's just that I have an irrational antipathy towards Mick Jagger. Why? I don't really know if it's any one thing more than a collection of bits and bobs picked up over the years from various outlets, and in all of them, he has appeared to be an arrogant, self-absorbed dick. Can he sing? Of course he can, and he obviously doesn't need the pathetically monotoned shower-stall catastrophe that is your editor of So What! to confirm this. Can he move? Like a whippet on skates. And does he have an 'it' factor? Doh!

But does he have soul? Errrrr, I don't think so. Perhaps once some resided in his diminutive, sinewy frame, but sadly it appears to this writer that he lost it somewhere between the world of drugs and high-investment banking. This appears to have occurred sometime during the aforementioned '70s, as he squabbled from afar with the cool and creaky Keith Richards


TONIGHT'S SHOW
DATE: TUE , NOVEMBER 15, 2005
CITY: SAN FRANCISCO CA
VENUE: SBC PARK
DOORS 5:00 pm
EVERCLEAR 6:00 pm – 6:25 pm
TUNING ROOM 6:00 pm – 6:44 pm
METALLICA 6:45 pm – 8:00 pm
ROLLING STONES 8:45 pm


*****Ecstasy of Gold*****
ORION
CREEP
*****ROAM Tape*****
ROAM
*****BAND INTRO*****
BELLZ
-SHORT DOODLE-
UNFORGIVEN
FUEL
SAD
NOTHING
PUPPETZ
*****ONE Tape*****
ONE
*****STOP*****
SANDMAN




LARS

who took to wearing a shirt adorned with the words WHO THE FUCK IS MICK JAGGER as he jammed his way from other countries and continents through Mick's starflighting. So again, it's a feeling I hold and goddamn me for it if need be but I cannot help myself. To be fair, The Stones have penned a song on their latest album "The Big Bang" called 'Sweet neo-Con,' where Sir Mick takes a pop at the bad-guys, the money-men, the dishonest, in fact experienced soul-suckers in the most powerful of arenas. This has led (as I understand it) to a series of security concerns regarding the possibility of loonies arriving uninvited to express their opinions of the song, but still, the backstage photo policy seemed a touch over the top to me.

Thankfully, as I arrived at HQ the Wednesday prior to Sunday the 13th, the important people in this whole equation were their usual, unflustered, unfettered and mighty Metallica selves. Not an air of nerves. Not a hint of worry. Indeed, as they ran through the opening night set, it was as though they'd been rehearsing, and working, for months, no visible sign of rust and every visible sign of the sort of might, stealth and power we have grown to know and love. 'Master...' was slung lower than a cowboy's holster, 'Turn The Page' was perfectly weighted to entrap the hoarding greybeards who would doubtless populate the field seats, and 'Orion' was mightily impressive, a rich and girthy reminder to all that Metallica is far more than immediately meets the ear.

The management arrived in town on Friday the 11th, and after some meetings (plus a rehearsal) headed off to Lars' house, where some of the man's usual pre-gig tension questions were quickly, and easily, fended off with the following reminder:

This is not your show.

This is not your responsibility.

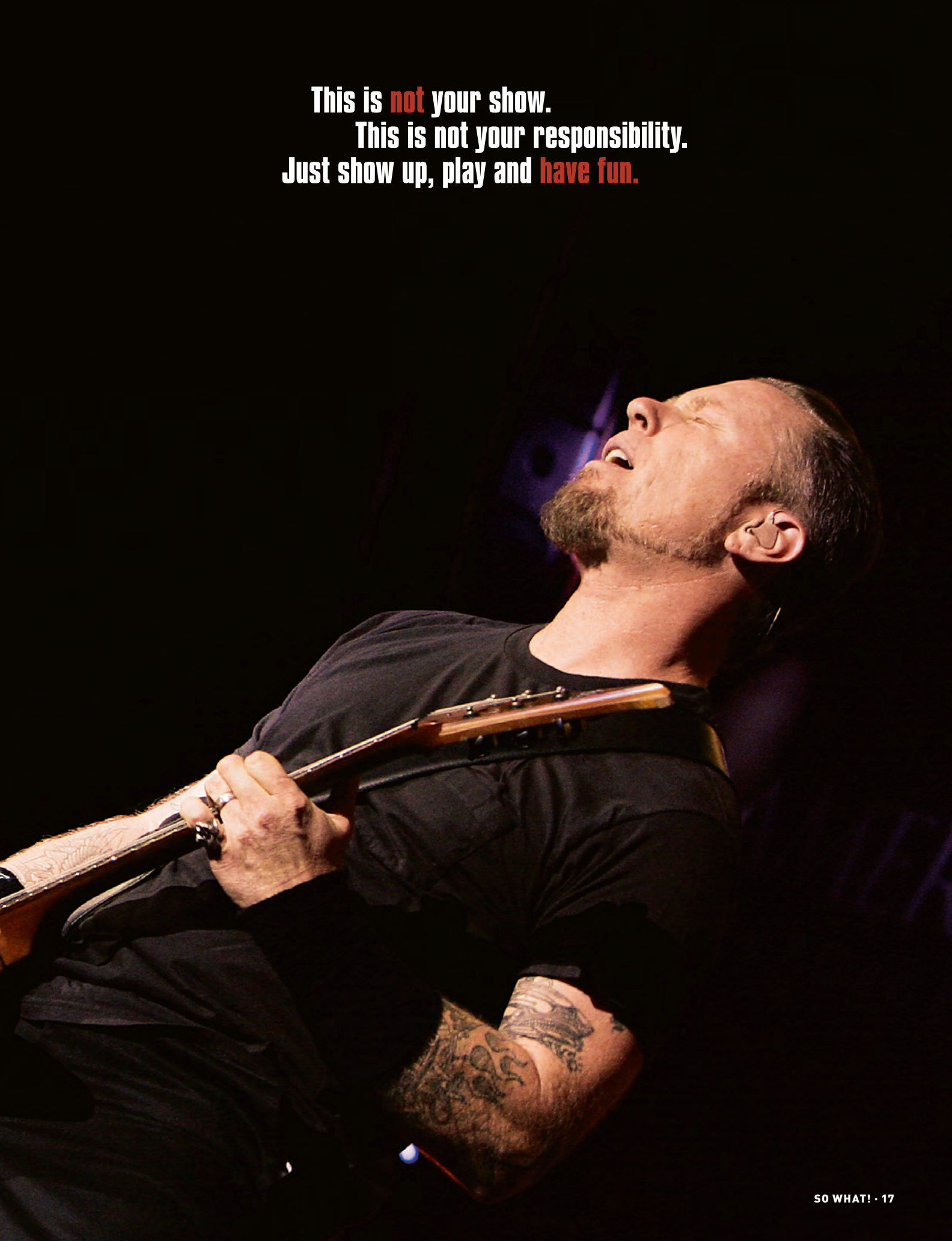
Just show up, play and have fun.

Words of wisdom it would appear, because as I entered the backstage area on Sunday the 13th, Lars was in just ahead and absolutely radiating cheeriness. Trust me, he is usually a little more wired into what's going on with everything on show day, and consequently can show edginess and nerves, but there was none of it. James, meanwhile, was quiet and perhaps a little tense, whilst Kirk was off doing something and Rob appeared to say that Ronnie Wood had invited him to the Rattlesnake Inn, The Stones' own personal hospitality and catering tent (much like Metallica's 'Rubber Room') and was thus taking off. He was, inevitably followed some 10 minutes later by the rest of the guys, whilst myself and management sort of loitered around at the back of the tent, pass-less and wondering what to do (management soon secured passes, and I took off to take some illegal shots inside the dressing room cabin).

Ah yes, the cabin. Small? Oh yes. I think it's been some years since Metallica had a backstage area so small, but of such a thing came an enormously positive spirit. Indeed, it actually started to feel like Metallica and its people were a small gang, an island for themselves, of themselves and (as decreed by tour law) to themselves. And as I explored this further, I recognized that for the first time since, oooh, 1988, Metallica were the youthful buckaroos on the bill. The young punks. The loud, ugly youth compared to the smoother, cultured experience of The Stones. You think it's a relative thing? Sure. But how about when I remind you there is, on average, a 20 year age gap between the two band's members? It makes Metallica almost whippersnappers...

I expected that a Rolling Stones backstage area was, given the rules which were stapled onto our foreheads, going to be tighter and more sterile than a very tight, very sterile sales meeting at a very large and very successful marketing company. As it turned out, there had to have been at least 200 guests milling around the Rattlesnake Inn and its annex tent, overspilling into some surrounding 'dead' areas, containing the grimy scent of

Jackson


This is not your show.
This is not your responsibility.
Just show up, play and have fun.

middle-aged money and power, as well as shadowy memories of filthy times at previous Stones gigs, say, 30 years prior. As I picked my way through the mass of graying hair, expensive tans, impressive surgeries and fat wallets, I knew that back in the day, this would've quickly descended into Caligula, which is not to cheat them of their dirty dues as the air still hung thick with the threat of a few late night key parties, vis-a-vis the Atom Egoyan film 'The Ice Storm.'

Equally bizarre were the network of backstage corridors and pathways to get around the absolutely enormous stage. I've been to many stadium tours, and absolutely none had this many odd routes and ways to get in and around the place. In fairness, it should be said that this was down to the venue as much as The Stones, but still the whole thing was funny. The tuning room, where Metallica would warm up prior to performance, could only be found after navigating a series of pink-tape-denoted left and right turns, whilst the stage itself seemed to have about 10 possible entry points. Indeed, the whole event was starting to develop into a quite brilliant pastiche of Spinal Tap meets The Song Remains The Same at a Microsoft convention in Utah... "Gimme Shelter," rather ironically, was nowhere to be felt.

What I will say is that for whatever reason, the Rolling Stones have presence. Lots of it. Again, they don't need me to confirm that. But as I stood and watched them soundcheck, their aura loomed large even though their persons stood small, dwarfed by the enormous stage with its field-long ego-ramp. And y'know what? Some of them looked cool. Charlie Watts, ever the epitome of style, slid effortlessly around his kit, Keith Richards was a disheveled testimony to the power of the rock'n'roll party from the top floor penthouse suite, and Ronnie Wood looked quite superb with his ruffle head and pink sweater. Mick? Yeah yeah, Mick semi-strutted, walked, even ambled with

an aura, a man who undoubtably has a chemical reaction with stages, and one which makes him grow about 20 feet. And this was all as dusk came down, with no-one in the stadium except a few hundred walkie-talkied personnel and anyone else who could blag a quick view of this intimate scenario. Of course the question remained as to whether this aura I felt was the result of genuine chemistry or bitterly engrained reverence. Answers were to come...

Meanwhile, everything seemed very polite, even a tad sedate, in Metallica world. And it was in the tuning room that I first started to sense some nerves. The guys just didn't seem their usual, confident selves, a bit stiff, a tad angular, not as free-flowingly strong as usual, perhaps even a little hesitant. Professional to the end, they did, of course, work their chops until the final seconds of the intro tape, but it was as though they had become very suddenly aware of their role, of being the support act, of playing for people who were of true legal age (that is, folks who had been lawyers by profession for the last 20 years) and as such, not their normal crowd. In short, this was the first time Metallica were in the position of needing to win over an audience for too long, and it was perhaps telling a tiny bit. The greater strategy for this was quite brilliant. Looking for a way to find a comfortable re-entry into the next phase of Metallica music, these shows forced the four into a small, tight unit with their backs ever-so-slightly against the wall.

As such, it had been quite some time since Metallica walked out (or, more accurately, sprinted out from the tuning room a little too tight to the intro tape rolling) to rows of empty seats in the front and a non-deafening roar from those in the stadium, and immediately broke into 'Orion,' a deliciously rare treat for the

Metallithrong assembled. And the balance for tonight's show was definitely on Stones fans, the date having sold out before Metallica were even associated with the bill. Something fell out of 'Orion' in the middle, and not being a musician I couldn't tell you what, but it was enough that we noticed and before we knew it, the correction had made and the song roared back on.

As I stood, behind Keith Richards' amp stack to the left of Lars' drums (house right), beside me stood a small, frail and somewhat elfin figure with toussled hair. He looked to be bouncing around a bit on his toes, and was leaning against the back of Richards' amp. Mick Jagger, from a range of two feet, is unspectacular. Old and somewhat lined, Jagger is about the same size as AC/DC's Angus Young, and his eyes held a cold, in-the-work-zone stare. It would be hard to reconcile the energetic, fluid and spunky man onstage with the quiet figure tottering around to my left. Incidentally, he lasted until 'Orion' ended, and I did not see another Stone watching on either night, so fair play to the man for checking Metallica out, whatever his reasons.

'Puppets' saw the guys hit a more familiar stride and zone, stalking menacingly out of their tentativeness whilst still, I believe, a little taken aback by the circumstance in which they found themselves, and as they worked their way through solid, cast-iron versions of '...Clover,' 'King...,' 'Fade...' and 'I Disappear,' it was their smart choice of covering Bob Seger's 'Turn The Page' which really saw some significant crowd involvement beyond the Metallifaithful. In a sense you'd call it a turning point, as 'Sad But True' seemed to walk louder and be greeted prouder, whilst even a pyro-less 'One' couldn't take away from the barbaric ferocity the song carries. Surprisingly, 'Nothing Else Matters' didn't seem to work with this audience, a great song, a noble ballad, but caught somewhere between a rock and a crusty old hard place here, but everyone knows '...Sandman' and even die-hard Stones folks were off their feet for a bit of choral participation. Cue applause and then a quick, uneventful exit, which brought the again rare experiences of

a) no encore and

b) walking through the Stones' backstage area and seeing it literally teeming with people who had obviously not watched anywhere close to the whole set, if any. Notable faces were Tom Waits and George Lucas to name two. And if you have to name but two, that's a damn fine place to begin and end methinks.

There came the obligatory meeting post-show. With management in town, and the first date of Metallica's 2005 World Tour complete, there was much to discuss I'm sure...SW!, however, does not interfere in such matters, thus I stood and watched the bizarre scenario of Stones liggers being herded off and away to their seats, great swarms of the bastards (I guess that's the kinda company over 40 years at the top gets you).

"Excuse me guys, would you mind very much standing against the trailer there for a moment, thank you," said a very big, very strong but very polite man. I couldn't understand why. This was our tiny little compound after all, and other than our cabins and a couple of porta-potties, there was only one big, long empty semi close by. So as Mick Jagger then skipped around the corner and headed up a loading ramp into said semi, I was a touch bemused. Even more bemusing was the sight of our own Dr. Don Oyao saying 'hi Mick' to Jagger, and Jagger saying 'hi' back, albeit looking a tad confused. When I asked Don about his new friend, he quite brilliantly said that, "I introduced myself to him up onstage and y'know, he seemed like a very mellow open guy..." This small example illustrates how Don has ended up meeting such figures as the Pope in his lifetime.

Once the meeting ended, wine was poured, spirits were up and the sense of relief in the air was palpable. And as the air reverberated to the strains of 'Start Me Up,' an assemblage/Metallica posse slowly made its way to the

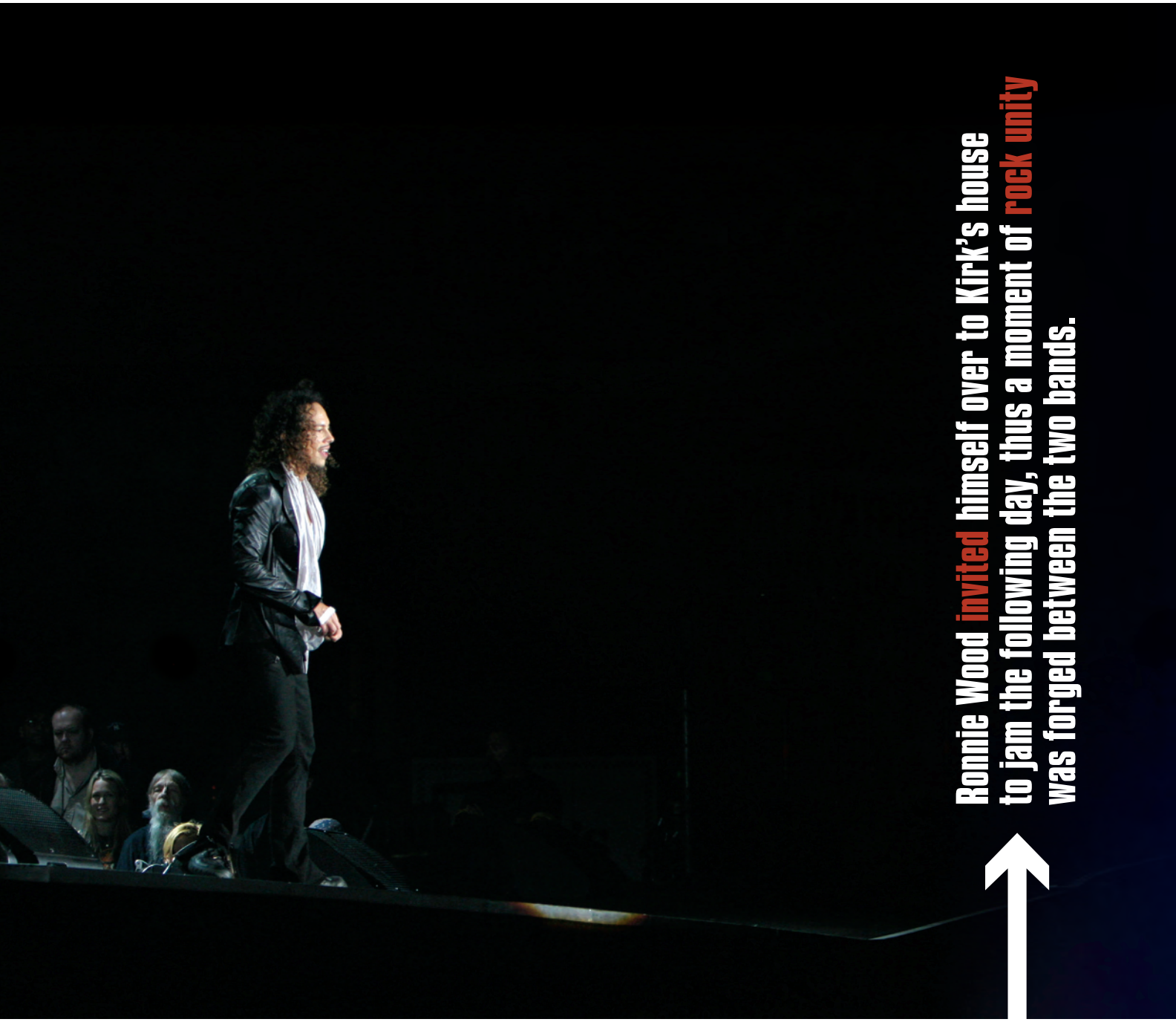
METAL

…whipping up even the greybeards, legal departments and accountants…

press box for a relaxing bit of Stones watching. I wandered along too, but was already getting the feeling this was not my kind of show, and sure enough, when I got to the press box and looked out at the gig, a few things were painfully clear. That I was looking at the giant video monitor and not the stage. That the cool electricity of the Stones sound check had been replaced by a slick stadium sensibility, the scent of men at work, the feeling of a Broadway play such as Cats or The Phantom of The Opera. That Mick Jagger looked like a man half his age, ridiculously unrelated to the old dude who'd been flitting around earlier. It's important to note Mick's professionalism (or ego? Probably both), but equally important to note that he appeared on a different planet to that of his bandmates. In sporting terms, he appeared to be the only person on the team playing for himself and himself only. Like this is news I suppose! It's more been part of the Stones' schtick for, oooh a coupla decades now. But the bottom line is that the whole spectacle came wafting across as sterile. A giant exercise in corporate rock. A live canvas on which diehard fans could paint the Stones' love and memories they wished to hold dear. And as my brain was soaking this up, the small video replay monitors which hang from pantries of most modern ballparks kept on flashing up Mercedes adverts (Mercedes being a sponsor of the 'A Bigger Bang' tour). I managed to ignore a dozen repeated screenings before being forced to leave, the stench of middle-aged corporate high-figure living just a little more prevalent than should be at a live rock show. Again, let me be clear. Millions of people hold The Rolling Stones in reverence, their history would only be denied by a blind fool, and their audience is certainly running alongside them all the way. But for me, it's just too detached to mean anything more than trips down memory lane for those who still harbor them.

Tuesday...ah yes, Tuesday indeed. The really fun day. The loose day. The comfy day. The full-on Metallica day. The 'last date of the 2005 World Tour so let's have some fucking fun' day. The no-nerves day. The family day...and what a fine sight it was to see the army of Metallichildren storm the gates, rampage into the portacabins, and turn them into coloring rooms and activity centers. And how great it was too to see Lars and James walking their families around the enormous stage, Lars happily snapping photos left and right of the stage and his kids on it, whilst outside the stadium, it was obvious that this was going to be a 'home' crowd, Metallica shirts dotting the horizon with a greater frequency than Sunday. Yes indeedy, Tuesday just felt more 'right' than Sunday had already.

The most bizarre thing, however, continued to be the fact that backstage, these dates simply did not feel like rock shows. I don't know why. Perhaps it was that large AMERIQUEST logo which loomed above the stage and was particularly prevalent during Metallica's sets. Perhaps it was the type of energy predominantly present and described already (refresher: older, richer, greyer, more satisfied), or perhaps it was just the continuing, determined presence of a ligging core that looked like a corporate office party, but the scent of 'rock' could only be sensed within the confines of the Metallica tuning room.



Ronnie Wood invited himself over to Kirk's house to jam the following day, thus a moment of rock unity was forged between the two bands.

And yes, they were rocking with decidedly more vim, verve and vigor, their confidence soaring on the sort of wave that occurs when you're about to play the last date of your 2005 world tour. And to cap the better vibe, there was no running to the stage as the intro tape ended, more a calm and confident stroll that saw the boys waiting and ready behind the amps.

The performance just seemed to carry more snap, crackle and pop. 'Orion' was more lithe and monstrous, note perfect, not a beat missed. 'Creeping Death' was confident, assured, in charge, and thus the set ran like a true Metalliset, to the point that James even went for the spell-out crowd-to-band echo before 'Fuel' (odd without an explosion of fuel-based pyro, but there we are, these are the ways of not headlining). 'Sad But True,' a proper stadium monster, sounded so clean, so low, so real, and after a better-received 'Nothing Else Matters' came the final trio of classics,'Master...,' 'One' and '...Sandman' all whipping up even the greybeards, legal departments and accountants to the point where they were off their seats. Yes. Everyone was off their seat. Everyone was standing. And everyone was in the stadium. And for a few moments, a few precious moments, as Lars thanked people for attending the last stop on the 2005 Metallica World Tour, it felt like theirs. Their show. Their tour. Their crowd. Their night...

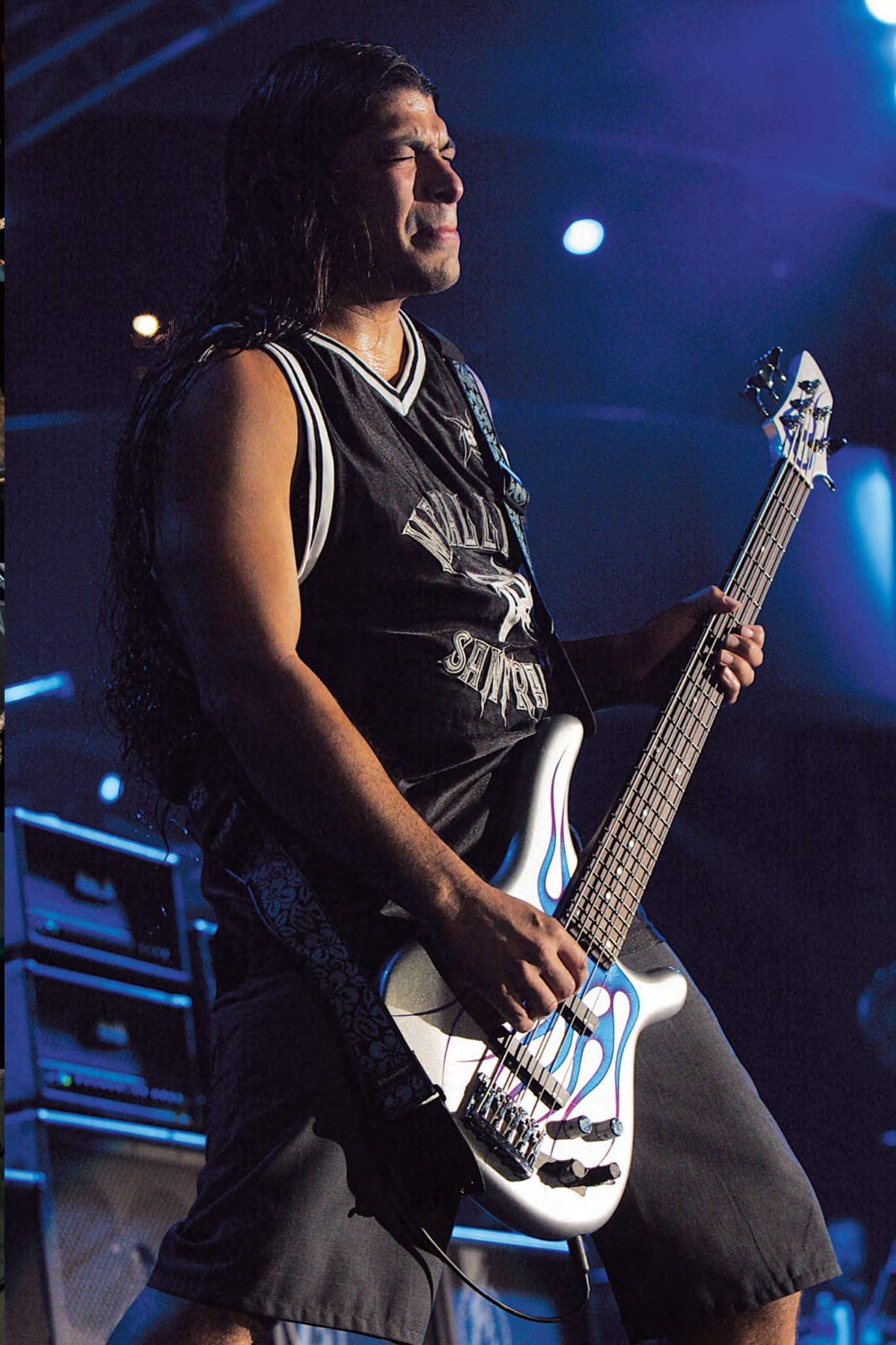
...which of course faded away quickly as the hundreds-strong ligging key-party posse backstage got shoved like a gloopy mass from space to space (including right next to ours, it's amazing how possessive you can feel about 50 square feet of car park concrete and a metal fence), and the reality that this

was someone else's tour once again clicked into place. You've doubtless heard rock tours called circuses, and this was a definition of the phrase.

Look, the Stones put on a phenomenal production, their crew is obviously both incredible and bloody hardworking, and their attention to detail faultless. But what I'm referring to, is the whole sense that this is one traveling 'country', a small nation which trundles around the world in its semis and jets, thousands of liggers everywhere, traditions long-set and iron-cast to the point of luxuriant inflexibility (you get the impression that the Stones get exactly what they want when they want it). And hey, amen, if that's your boat then float in it. But it was a reminder to us all that if we think Metallica might be getting, err, old and 'veteran,' then thankfully in the greater frame of rock'n'roll age they have a long way to go. In fact, they're still goddam whippersnapper young!

The atmosphere in the cabins was relaxed and happy yet not especially 'post-show' like. But then came a special moment so generally bizarre that on hearing the whisper of its occurrence-to-come I giggled, and on hearing the details of its outcome I was flabbergasted.

I heard various people muttering 'OK, it's time, they're ready, let's do this' military-style, as if a stealth custard pie-ing of some innocent birthday boy was about to take place. Instinctively I wanted to follow along. This, after all, is what I do, it's my job, but a 7th sense overrode the 6th and instead I stayed behind in our compound, awaiting word of what this secret migration



transpired to be all about.

"You'll get a copy of the photo if it's 'approved!'" laughed one of the touring personnel to the alarmed reaction of James. The guys had just returned from the undercover mission, and it had been to have a meet-and-greet with the Rolling Stones!!! A meet-and-greet! Perhaps I'm being harsh, perhaps this is how it's done when you have different acts in different cities on different days. But after all the odd little rules and ways (including, I learned earlier, the refusal to be allowed to sell a Metallica shirt on which the words 'rolling' and 'stones' was printed), and comparing to how utterly hospitable Metallica are to their guests whether for a day or a tour, this just seemed a little, hmmm, stiff.

Word has it that the Stones were all very polite and what-not, but the general impression I perceived was that it was all very professional. And again, that's great and better than being dicks choosing not to say anything, but it goes to prove the point that the Stones you see now are a business, a corporation thundering around the world, a 'hi' and a 'bye' and a quick, polite 'thank you' to all and sundry as their Orient Express passes through town. I did pick up that Ronnie Wood invited himself over to Kirk's house to jam the following day, thus a moment of rock unity between the two bands was forged, but beyond that it sounded, well, just plain professional.

With the handshakes and 'P's and 'Q's exchanged, the Hetfield/Ulrich kids were bundled up and made their way home (this was a school night after all!) and only Kirk and Robert stuck around to enjoy some more of the evening (Kirk and Lani taking off to the press box again to watch a second night of the Stones rolling their stuff).

It had been a highly productive, and interesting, two days. The biggest positive was that Lars, James, Rob and Kirk got to 're-enter' the creative world via the biggest of stages with the most legendary of bands in the most pressure-free situation possible. It also reminded them that in the greater context of still-touring rock bands, they are youngsters, a band with many, many miles left on the engine, and whilst these are not the sort of men to worry about such things, it's inevitable the thought has crept across them at one time or another in the last year.

But truly, the resonance of these shows to a greater public was that Metallica (despite what some will say) remain off the center path. They remain a juggernaut unto themselves. And whilst some have labeled them sell-outs, I have yet to witness Mercedes Benz ads flashing everywhere and giant Ameriquest signs in the sky (I honestly thought it was part of the ballpark until I remembered that I went to a dozen or so Giants games last year and did not see the damn thing) at Metallica shows or on Metallica tours.

And as I stood outside SBC Park, the strains of the Stones strolling gently around the night sky, it felt good to know that in a greater arena, to a greater, wider audience, Metallica remain most decidedly not mainstream.

EXIT

THE METALLICA 2005 WORLD TOUR REHEARSALS

HQ, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2005

EXIT

SANITARIUM
CAUTION

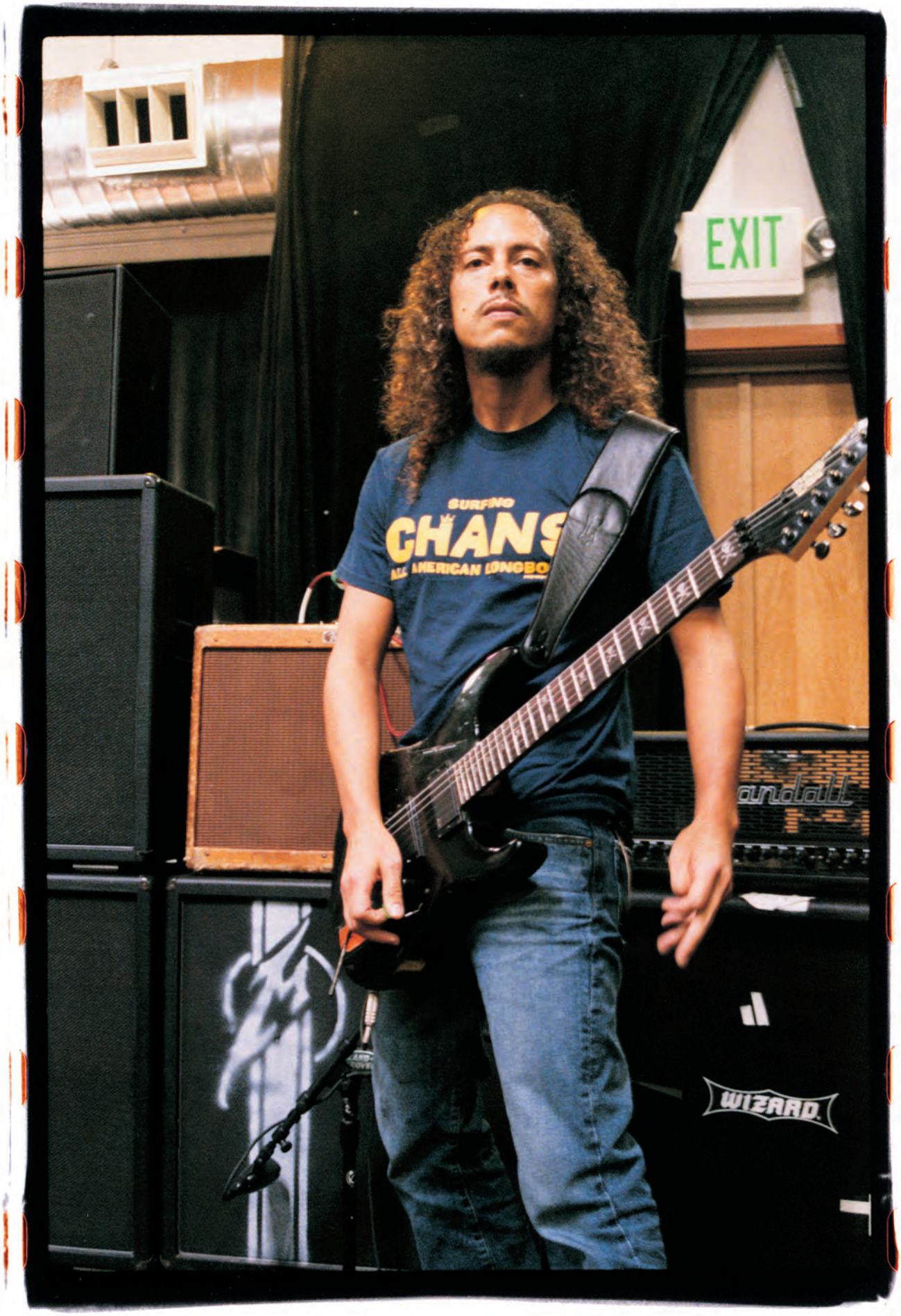
RAIDERS

Praise the Lo
METALLICA
Roland

Praise the Lo
KRANK

DONT TREAD
MESA

DONT


EXIT
SURFING
WIZARD

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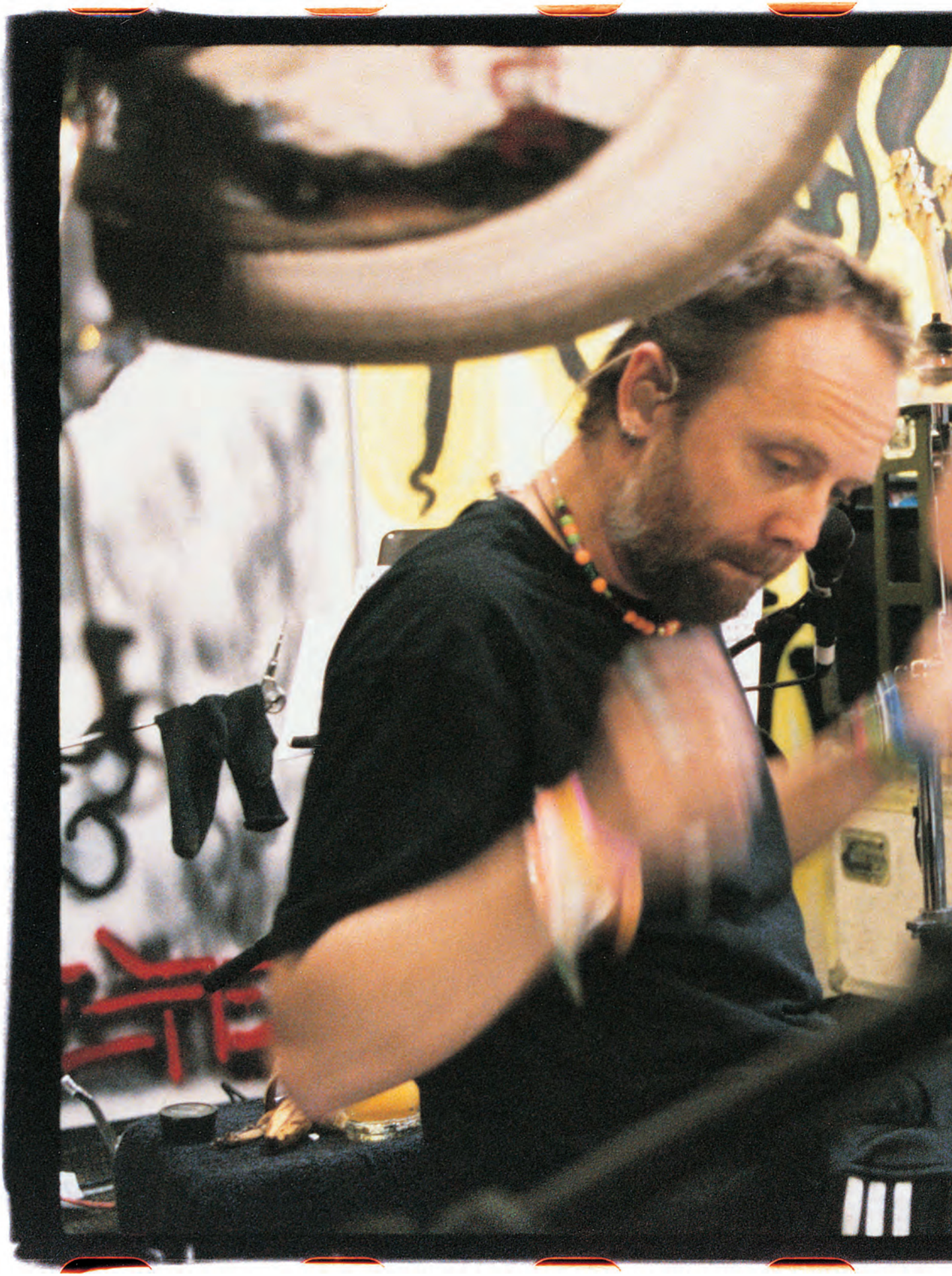
EXIT

SANITARIUM

SURFING
CHANS
AMERICAN LONGBOAR
Jackson

EXIT

DONT TREAD ON



EXIT

KRANK
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SANIT

eye of the BEHOLDER

Mike Zetting

Matt Lucas

Ian Galindo

Steve Kirtland

Mario Furthner

Olivia Cheong

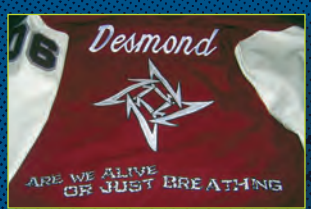
Eric Renner

David Longcrier

Mike Coffey

Adam Peditto

Beatrice Lollis



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Zeb Souza

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